



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

AGENDA REQUEST

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| AGENDA OF: | 10/09/07 | AGENDA REQUEST NO: | V A |
| INITIATED BY: | TRAVIS TANNER, AICP SENIOR PLANNER <i>Travis Tanner</i> | RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: | PLANNING |
| PRESENTED BY: | TRAVIS TANNER, AICP SENIOR PLANNER | ASSISTANT PLANNING DIRECTOR: | DOUGLAS P. SCHOMBURG, AICP <i>Douglas P. Schomburg</i> |
| | | ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT HEAD (S): | N/A |
| SUBJECT / PROCEEDING: | CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) FOR METHODIST HOSPITAL TO RELOCATE AN EXISTING LIFE FLIGHT HELIPAD LOCATED AT 16655 SOUTHWEST FWY, IN THE GENERAL BUSINESS (B-2) DISTRICT – CONSIDERATION AND ACTION | | |
| EXHIBITS: | STAFF REPORT, VICINITY MAP, CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN, FLIGHT PATH PLAN, PLAT EXCERPT | | |
| CLEARANCES | | APPROVAL | |
| LEGAL: | N/A | DIRECTOR OF PLANNING: | SABINE SOMERS-KUENZEL, AICP <i>AK</i> |
| RECOMMENDED ACTION | | | |
| Approval with the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Compliance with the attached conceptual site plan submitted by the applicantCompliance with the attached flight path plan | | | |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | | | |
| <p>The Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, located at 16655 Southwest Freeway, in the General Business (B-2) district, is proposing to relocate their existing ground helipad to a new location on their site. Under Chapter Two, Article II of the Development Code, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for a helipad in the B-2 district. Thus, a CUP is required for a new helipad in a different location. The current helipad is located at ground level, to the east of the hospital. The applicant is proposing to relocate the helipad approximately 500' to the northeast, on top of a proposed parking garage. The helipad would be at an elevation of 65' from ground level. According to the applicant, it will be for life flight purposes only, will result in greater safety as far as interior traffic circulation is concerned and will not have an increased noise impact. The Planning Department has consulted with the Aviation Director for the Sugar Land Regional Airport and informed the applicant of licensing provisions contained within the Sugar Land Code of Ordinances as well. Representatives are coordinating with Sugar Land Regional Airport staff as well as with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to secure all necessary permission in addition to the CUP. However, the Aviation Department cannot grant a License for the helipad until the CUP is approved by City Council.</p> | | | |

A Public Hearing was held for this item at the September 27, 2007 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Following the hearing, the Commission asked for a number of clarifications. All issues have been addressed and are covered in detail in the attached report. Staff is confident that this CUP will result in an improvement to the current situation at the site.

File No. 8525

CC: Greg Quintero, greg.quintero@hok.com

EXHIBITS

ANALYSIS:

Case Details:

This requested Conditional Use Permit (CUP) concerns the Methodist Sugar Land Hospital site, located at the intersection of US 59 and Sweetwater. The property is in the General Business (B-2) district and is surrounded by B-2 zoning. It is important to note that the site is not within a quarter of a mile of any residential land uses. There is an existing hospital at the site and an expansion to the hospital facility currently underway. In addition, there will be a medical office building to the north of the existing facility and expansion as well as a parking garage to support both the hospital and office uses. Those uses are allowed by right at the site.

This case is specifically regarding the relocation of a life flight helipad, which requires a CUP in the B-2 district under the Development Code. There is an existing helipad at the site, which is located at ground level, to the east of the hospital. The proposed relocation is roughly 500' to the northeast, at the top of the new parking garage. The new elevation will be approximately 65'.

The situation will reportedly be safer from an internal traffic circulation standpoint, as the helipad will no longer be at grade within the site. The relocation also will not have an adverse noise impact. Like the existing helipad, the new pad site will be for life flight purposes only according to the applicant. Details of the existing and new location are available in their conceptual site plan, which is attached to this document. Life flight helicopters will approach the facility consistent with the freeway (US 59), and in a manner that least affects any residential uses. This will further limit any potential noise impact associated with the proposed use.

The applicant has worked closely with Sugar Land Regional Airport staff to address any issues related to air safety. Airport staff is confident that the requested location is appropriate and superior to the previous location. Airport will continue to coordinate with the applicant on the detailed aspects of the proposed helipad. The applicant is also working with the FAA to secure any necessary approvals from them. There are a number of entities involved in reviewing the helipad outside of this CUP case.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007 PUBLIC HEARING:

A number of questions were asked of staff and of the applicant by the Commission following the above Public Hearing. We have detailed out those comments and responses as follows:

Current Helipad Facilities at Hospital Site:

The Commission asked whether the existing helipad was developed under a CUP. The existing facility was not. At the time of the question staff believed that the hospital and helipad were constructed prior

to the CUP requirement. Further research confirmed that this was in fact the case. The existing hospital facility and helipad had been approved and constructed in 1997, prior to the current Development Code and the regulations requiring a CUP for helipads.

Clarification on Site Plan Drawing:

The Commission had questions regarding a discrepancy between the location of the existing helipad on the site plan and the actual helipad location. According to the applicant, there was in fact a discrepancy. At this time, their site plan has been revised and is accurate regarding the existing and proposed helipad location. The revised site plan is attached to this document.

Flight Path:

Discussion also occurred regarding the proposed helicopter flight path in relation to the nearest residential uses. The applicant had reported that the flight path would not conflict with any of the surrounding neighborhoods, but their plan appeared to reflect some degree of overlapping with residential uses. This issue has been addressed in two (2) ways: (1) the flight path originally shown to the Commission by the applicant was for the existing helipad, which is located further south than the proposed helipad, and (2) the plan now shows the new proposed flight path and it has been revised to avoid any level of imposition on residential uses. The flight path plan is attached to this document.

General Aspects and Aviation Department Licensing:

Finally, the Commission requested additional general information on this topic, which can be summarized as follows: In addition to the CUP requirement, there are licensing provisions in the City of Sugar Land Code of Ordinances that the applicant is required to follow. Sugar Land Aviation Department of the Regional Airport is responsible for enforcing these provisions. At this time the Aviation Department is already coordinating with the applicant on this process. The staff are confident that this will be an improvement to the current situation at the site in terms of the location and height of the helipad. The proposed site is a better and safer plan than what is currently in place. At this point, Airport staff is mainly concerned with the helipad complying with the FAA "Advisory Circular" document. The Aviation Department will ensure that this is the case in the City Licensing process. The Advisory Circular namely addresses the following items:

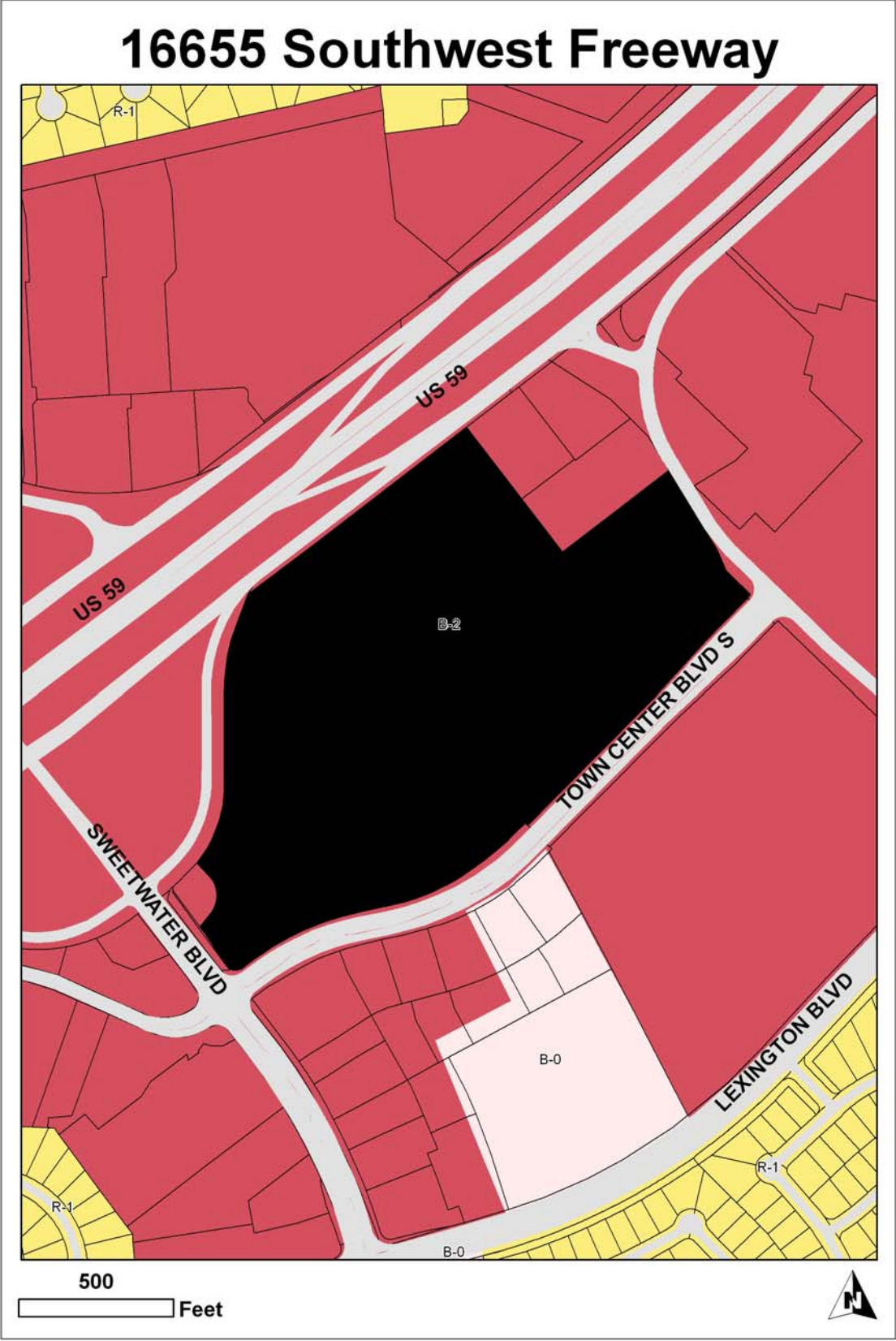
- Safe location and appropriate helipad size
- Paved helipad surface
- Avoidance of any obstructions in the flight path
- Avoidance of crosswind approach/departure (i.e. approach/departure consistent with prevailing winds, hence the initial north/south direction of the flight path)
- Helipad perimeter markings
- Helipad identification markings
- Lighting
- Marking/lighting of any obstructions
- Limited public access to helipad
- Compatible land use

The final item is of most relevance to the Commission, as other items will be addressed by Sugar Land Regional Airport staff. Staff believes that the helipad is compatible with surrounding uses and that the pad will be well located on the site. Aside from the interior of the Sugar Land Business Park area, the proposed site appears to be an area of the City with the least proximity to residential uses in terms of developed areas. The applicant cannot receive a License from the Aviation Department to operate a helipad until the CUP is approved by City Council.

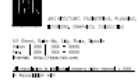
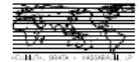
This proposal is for the relocation of an existing helipad and is not a new concept at the site. It will be for life flight purposes only and will be located at least a quarter of a mile from any residential uses. It will be safer from an internal traffic circulation standpoint and will not have an adverse impact in terms of noise. The new location and height of the helipad will be an overall improvement to the current situation in terms of public safety.

File No. 8525

Vicinity Map:



16515 Southwest Freeway
Sugar Land, Texas 77479
Prepared for
The Methodist Hospital
Client Location



| Coordinate Name | Coordinate Type | Coordinate Address | Line 1 | Line 2 |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Coordinate Name | Coordinate Type | Coordinate Address | Line 1 | Line 2 |

Key Words:

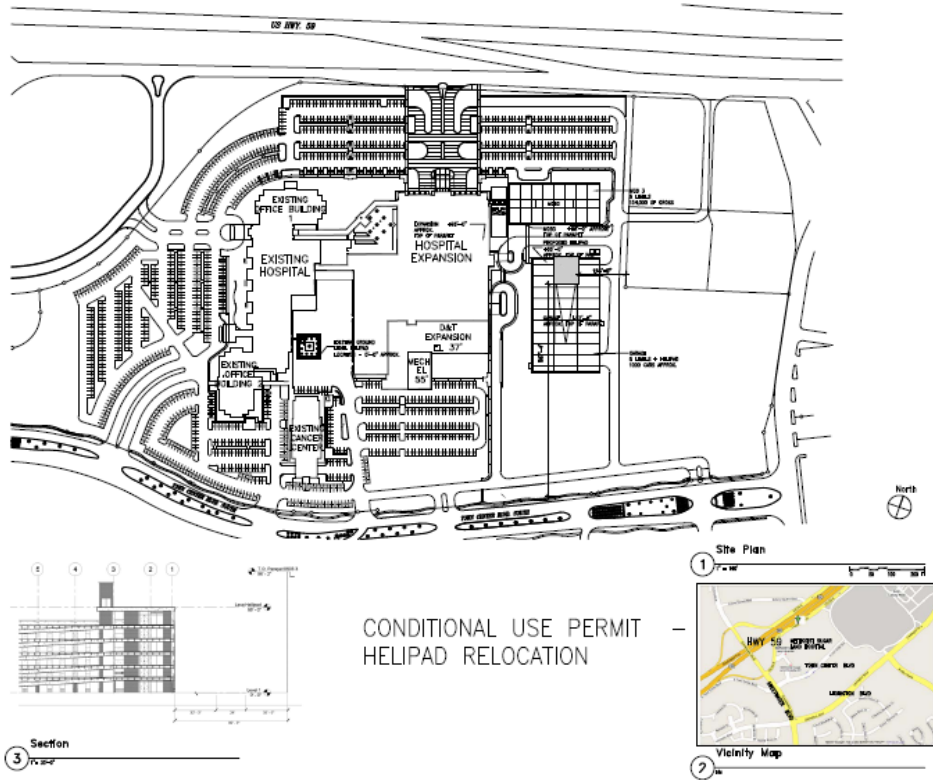
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SITE PLAN

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AP 100



Flight Path Plan:

Methodist Sugar Land Hospital Expansion



METHODIST SUGAR LAND HOSPITAL HELIPAD RELOCATION C.U.P.

28 September, 2007



FLIGHT PATH

The preferred existing flight path will remain unchanged. Approach and departure takes into consideration prevailing winds as well as least occupied zones.

Recorded Plat Excerpt:

